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Letters To The Editor

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A Matter of Public Trust

Tom Braden's column (Mayor Lindsay and the Public Trust) is either an intentional hatchet job or the result of some terribly sloppy thinking. Mr. Braden compares his long ago intrigues with Allen Dulles of the CIA to Mayor John Lindsay's refusal to meet secretly with two New York policemen to hear corruption charges.

Braden's once-upon-a-time spy story (completely unattributed and uncheckable) doesn't even come close to marking "the fall of John Lindsay," as he so pompously concludes. It could, however, mark the fall of Tom Braden from any position of respect among news analysts.

Mr. Braden urges his readers to compare Allen Dulles with John Lindsay in terms of their sensitivity to "public trust" on the basis of their reactions to similar situations. Dulles, of course, is set up as the winner.

The little game passes lightly over the following facts: Dulles was not an elected official; his allegiance was very pointedly to the President alone; secret meetings were far more possible for him than they are for Mr. Lindsay; Dulles very probably acted to protect his own reputation as an administrator, to avoid public embarrassment for the President, and to maintain his department budget. In fact, "public trust" didn't enter into it at all.

A better one-for-one comparison could have been made if only Mr. Braden's story had him telling the President about the money leak at CIA. Then we could see whether or not the President indulged in any secret meetings without telling Allen Dulles about it.

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